

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 876

By Coley

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James Luther Dickinson.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should honor the memory of a legendary entertainer, artist, and permanent fixture of American music, James Luther Dickinson; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished pianist, singer, and producer, Jim Dickinson was an outstanding musician who shaped the Memphis sound in a phenomenal career that spanned more than four decades; and

WHEREAS, born in Little Rock, Arkansas on November 15, 1941, Jim Dickinson moved with his family to Memphis in 1948; and

WHEREAS, raised to appreciate the value of music by his mother, who played piano at the local Baptist church, Mr. Dickinson learned his most enduring musical lessons, as well as the blues and boogie-woogie piano, from Memphis's local talent; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson formed his first band, the Regents, in 1958, and while the group played in Memphis bars and parties, this young prodigy soaked up all he heard in what was America's number one music city; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis), Jim Dickinson married the love of his life, Mary Lindsay Andrews, and began making his mark on the music world; and

WHEREAS, wary of the Los Angeles music industry, Mr. Dickinson chose instead to remain in Memphis and became a stalwart champion of the city's uniqueness; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson's earthy musical approach resonated with his peers, and he collaborated with musical greats as a session musician at several Memphis studios; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Jim Dickinson lent his masterful instrumental and vocal gifts on what has been called the last great record on the Sun label, recording “Cadillac Man” by the Jesters; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson added his soulful touch on the Rolling Stone’s classic album *Sticky Fingers*, in their seminal ballad “Wild Horses,” and his piano can be heard on the Flamin Groovies’ album *Teenage Head*; and

WHEREAS, at the Sound of Memphis studio in the late 1960s, he joined with other session players to form the Dixie Flyers, which backed up numerous Atlantic Records artists, including the celebrated Aretha Franklin on her 1970 album, *Spirit in the Dark*; and

WHEREAS, after the Dixie Flyers dissolved, Jim Dickinson recorded several solo albums, beginning with *Dixie Fried* in 1972, which realized his vision of an avant-garde American roots music and featured songs by Bob Dylan, Carl Perkins, and Furry Lewis; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson displayed his keyboard, vocal, and guitar prowess as an original member of the Memphis rock band Mudboy and the Neutrons, and, alongside noted musicians Sid Selvidge, Lee Baker, and Jimmy Crosthwait, influenced the Memphis alternative rock scene in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s with their unique mixture of blues, swamp, R&B, folk, gospel, and country music; and

WHEREAS, Jim Dickinson’s enthusiasm, love of the offbeat, and willingness to work on low budgets found him producing everyone from reggae icons Toots and the Maytals to Seattle grunge band Mudhoney and the Mississippi blues musician T-Model Ford; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, he played and co-produced Ry Cooder’s acclaimed albums *Into the Purple Valley* and *Boomer’s Story*, and his brilliant performance with Alex Chilton on the 1979 album *Like Flies on Sherbert* put him in demand as a producer for younger acts, such as Willy DeVille and Mojo Nixon; and

WHEREAS, a genius at shaping and molding a piece of music, he produced the Memphis rock group Big Star’s albums *Third* and *Sister Lovers* in 1974, which achieved cult status and led to Mr. Dickinson’s production of the 1987 album *Pleased to Meet Me* by the Replacements; and

WHEREAS, in high demand as both a pianist and as a producer, Mr. Dickinson sought assignments he found personally challenging and rewarding and, in 1997, he earned the honor

of playing keyboards on Bob Dylan's comeback album, *Time Out of Mind*, which was named Album of the Year at the 1998 Grammy Awards; and

WHEREAS, Jim Dickinson's appeal also reached into the world of film. He scored many film soundtracks, including *Southern Comfort*; *The Border*; *Paris, Texas*; *Streets of Fire*; *Alamo Bay*; *Crossroads*; and *The Long Riders*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson was the patriarch of a musical dynasty; his sons, Luther and Cody, played on several of his solo albums recorded over the past decade, including *Free Beer Tomorrow* and *Jungle Jim and the Voodoo Tiger*, and have achieved remarkable successes in their own right as members of the three-time Grammy-nominated blues-rock band North Mississippi Allstars; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Mr. Dickinson received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007 for Engineering and Production from the Americana Music Association; and

WHEREAS, Jim Dickinson remained active and enterprising during his final years, continuing to produce local artists as well as occasionally performing and recording with the Memphis rock groups Mud Boy and the Neutrons, Panther Burns, and Snake Eyes; and

WHEREAS, understanding both the impermanence of his own life and the enduring power of the music he made, Mr. Dickinson used his final moments on earth to reassure his family and friends that "there is light beyond the darkness as there is dawn after the night" and that he "would not be gone as long as the music lingers," before finally proclaiming, "World boogie is coming;" and

WHEREAS, a devoted family man, Jim Dickinson will be sorely missed by his beloved wife, Mary Lindsay Dickinson, his two sons, Luther and Cody, and a host of family, friends, and devoted fans who will always hold him in the highest regard; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickinson, his indelible influence on the music industry, and his significant contribution to the arts should be commemorated by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James Luther Dickinson, reflecting fondly upon

his artistry as a musician, his preeminence as a producer, and his status as a Memphis musical icon.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to Mr. Dickinson's family and many friends our deepest sympathies and most sincere condolences.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.